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## MAGNIFYING ONE'S OFFICE.

BY REV. A. A. MINER, D.D.

There are many elements in human nature which tempt to an overestimate of the part one bears in the great drama of life. The Sunday-school teacher often estimates his influence upon the public welfare above that of the pulpit. Sometimes a College Professor deems his special department of work so superior in its importance as to demand a far greater portion of time than any other. In legislation, a given measure, having little special merit in itself, is often coddled with much the same fondness that a parent cherishes toward his child.

This is obviously true of the warrior. The services he renders are conspicuous. In the eyes of the uneducated his trappings surround him with a halo of glory. The bewitching power of martial music, the serried ranks of the battalion, the impressive pomp and circumstance of war, and especially the poetic and historic tributes showered upon the successful general, all tend to fire his ambition, to intensify his ardor, and move him to a prompt entrance into any open door for conflict.

We have a national aversion to "standing armies;" but the phrase "regular army" does not strike us in the same way. And yet it is substantially the same thing. Ordinarily the army is idle in camp. Its pent-up energies make it uneasy. It is filled with *ennui*. Rumors of national or international disturbances reach it. Some drunken sailor has been injured in a brawl in a foreign port, and we indignantly demand reparation, and that it be made at once. Or some foreign officer or diplomat has spoken ambiguously, and our national pride is wounded. Instead of a little calm reflection and cool judgment, we are instantly all aflame. The newspaper press takes up the matter with an alacrity that assumes to be patriotism. The administration press proudly demands protection of our country's dignity. The opposition press is glad to see the administration in a ridiculous plight and gives a quasi or ambiguous support to the demand. The army snuffs the smoke of battle from afar, and the camp is all astir. Each officer is wondering

whether, in the final struggle, he or his command may not hold the key to the situation, and his own name come to be associated with that of Washington, Wellington, Napoleon and Grant. Such visions of glory are not easily put aside. The blood of the battlefield, it is true, is not forgotten; the desolated homes are not overlooked; the broken hearts of wives, mothers, sisters, lovers, friends, disturb the imagination. But are not all these inevitable? Shall our country permit its honor to be tarnished? Shall it incur the suspicion of cowardice? Shall it permit itself to be despised by the great powers of the earth?

Thus the confusion increases. The original difficulty, if there was any, is lost sight of, and the roar of cannon begins. Good citizens may remonstrate; peace men, denounced as mere sentimentalists, may petition for a stay of proceedings; the clergy even, remembering their vocation as ministers of the religion of peace, may emphasize the iniquities of war, at the hazard of being stigmatized as cranks, and, perhaps, dismissed from their livings. Such is the hold which the greatest barbarism of the ages still has upon the foremost nations of the earth.

It is a matter for the most profound congratulation that public attention is aroused as never before to the duty of governments making such arrangements as will preclude this irresponsible turmoil. By treaty stipulations to arbitrate when differences arise, by some settled rule of arbitration, by a permanently constituted court of nations, or by some other method, should be put away the danger of being precipitated into conflict by a mere blunder when blood is hot and the fever high.

The American Peace Society is one of the prominent agencies seeking such a result. Its long and honorable history gives it high vantage ground in its efforts to command public attention and confidence. Perhaps there is no channel through which the generous contributions of the philanthropist can flow with better promise of reaching the sources of influence, and of tempering the heart of the nation to the pulsations of peace.

To the many distinguished men who have filled the office of Secretary with great usefulness and honor, the last of whom, deeply respected and beloved, fell so unexpectedly at the post of duty in Rome, another has been added, who, we are assured, will give a new impulse and impart fresh vigor to a cause of such vast moment. Let every friend of peace stay up his hands and bid him God-speed.